DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 214 730 RC 013 275

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TITLE Transactions Among Partners.
PUB DATE Feb 81
NOTE 23p.; Address presented at the Forum of the Partnership for Rural Improvement (Mount Spokane, Washington, February 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Agency Cooperation; Community Involvement; Futures (of Society); Higher Education; History; Interdisciplinary Approach; Models; Planning; Professional Education; *Role Perception; *Rural Areas; *Rural Development; Theories
IDENTIFIERS Eastern Washington University; *Partnership for Rural Improvement; *Planners

ABSTRACT

The past and historical future of the Partnership for Rural Improvement (PRI) and its model for rural planning and development are explored. Evolution of the rural-urban conceptual dichotomy is reviewed. Rural is perceived as a state of being rather than a place. Implications of the PRI experience for new knowledge and skills in rural community planning and development are discussed and an emerging professional role is presented. The consequences of this new professional curriculum at the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Eastern Washington University are considered. (Author/BRR)

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TRANSACTIONS AMONG PARTNERS

Dr. Joseph Luther

An Address

Presented to the

Forum

of the

Partnership For Rural Improvement

at

Grambo's On The Mountain

Mount Spokane, Washington

February, 1981

RC 013275

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TRANSACTIONS AMONG PARTNERS

This presentation is an exploration of the historical future of the Partnership for Rural Improvement and its model for rural planning and development. The implications of the PRI experience for new knowledge and skills in rural community planning and development will be discussed and an emerging professional role will be presented. The consequences of this new professional role will be illustrated by the changes in the professional curriculum at the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at EWU and in the adult and continuing education programs being developed by the PRI consortium.

ABOUT DR. JOSEPH LUTHER

Joe Luther is an Associate Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at Eastern Washington University. He describes himself as an educator with a proclivity for rural environmental planning. He was a Program Associate with the Partnership for Rural Improvement for three year, serving as the campus coordinator for Eastern Washington University. He has done extensive rural and environmental planning throughout Eastern Washington and the United States. He served as the Assistant Director of the Urban Extension Program at Texas A&M University; Co-Director of that University's Community Fellows Program and; as Chairman of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at EWU. Until this year, Joe Luther has been assigned at least 50 percent in community service work. However, this year is his time to pause and reflect on what all this means. He and his wife, Vicki, are engaged in research and writing on emerging role models for planners and community development specialists. These models, which incorporate planning, behavioral sciences and futurism, are being adopted into the curriculum at EWU and are emerging in the adult and continuing education effort throughout the Eastern Sub-Region. This is resulting in a "new school" of planning education at EWU, which extensively relies upon the Community Service Center, Dr. B. Ray Horn, Dr. Bill Goetter and others in this program. Joe describes this as an exciting time and one which he wishes to share with you at this Forum.

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My friends, it is a great pleasure and distinct honor to once more stand with you in the community which we call the Partnership. I would like to thank Dr. Rob McDaniel for making this reunion possible and Dr. Ralph Loomis for his warm introduction of fellowship.

When Rob first suggested my participation in the Forum, there was no hesitation on my part: I eagerly sought a means of rejoining old friends and of greeting new ones. After spending some four years in dialogue with you, you can well imagine my delight at having an opportunity for uninterrupted and prolonged exposition.

Those of you who have known me only as a name in an annual report may fear the worst: an academic lecture. Those of you who know me best may fear the worst: Aggie jokes and John Wayne imitations. However, I can surely empathize with Rob McDaniel's precarious perch out on the limb of social innovation. So, in celebration of Rob's imaginative insistance that this community listen to one of its own, I shall strive to respect the neutral square and constrain this evening's activity to a brief exploration.

I like the word - explore. I am what I am because I am an explorer, a wanderer, a searcher, a prospector. My quest is discovery and in discovery - enlightenment.

So come with me this evening and explore. Come wander through the mazeways of rural Washington and fathom the mystery of mysteries - the future history of PRI.

The title of this dialogue was at once, "Transactions Among Partners." Rob simply told me to speak to the paper which Vicki and I are giving to the American Planning Association. Ralph, having been down the road a greater distance than Rob, insisted on more information. So I stalled him by describing this conversation as an examination of the future history of PRI.

Here in this room is the history, and the future of the Partnership. We've been together long enough now to have a history - and a future. If that sounds like a marriage, it is - at least we're going steady.

I've been a student and practitioner of rural planning for some ten years now. Each year, about this time, I have to stand in front of my students and try to define the word "rural". It always seems awkward. It's like the day Professor Briggs made me write a paper in Freshman English on the meaning of truth and beauty. (They are synonyms).

Did you know that there are some 30 statutory definitions of rural, some 22 case-law definitions and 2 definitions in Webster's dictionary? Most, if not all, are geographical in orientation. "Rural means a place ....". After we try to sort out whether the population should be 1,500 or 2,000 or less than 10,000 or conversely less than 5 dwelling units per acre, we finally must arrive at the conclusion that rural isn't a place - it is a state of being.

One of my arcane skills in life is that of cartography - map making. I see the world in terms of classical space. I am compelled to draw a boundary on a map and say with credibility that this land is rural. All my geographical education and planning practice has prepared me to conceive of rural America as a point in space.

Von Thunen, Lösch, Cristaller and even Homer Hoyt have forced me to see the region as either hexagons, central places, concentric rings, sectors or multinuclei nodes. Given these abstractions, I can neatly visualize and circumscribe rural regions. And with abstractions, I can model, simulate, forecast and project the possible futures of rural places.

This Euclidian window on the world has shaped the perceptions of countless students and thus of all of us. Think for a moment how classical land economic theory has neatly distributed our culture. In all of these geometric replications of reality, there is a central place - the city and a hinterland - rural regions. This, I submit, is not a reality, but rather a mythology.

How often have we been told the oral history or mythology of the country hick and the city slicker - the farmer's daughter and the travelling salesman? This is an ancient parable, probably dating back to the beginnings of civilization.

Civilization meant the end to hunting and gathering and the institutionalization of agri-business. Human settlements appeared and suddenly reality became "here and there" and "us and them". The urbanization of society radically altered the consciousness of mankind.

William Irwin Thompson (1978) describes this perception of the basic structure of civilization as a dialectical tension between center and periphery. The resources come from the periphery and are controlled at the center. As Thompson describes the perception, "Whether the energy is the water coming from upstream in the Nile or Tigris, or the oil coming from Alaska, the resources are at the periphery, where the hicks are, and are controlled at the center, where the elite are". Does this sound familiar? Do you have any idea how many Aggie jokes I've endured?

And why are the city dwellers elite? Because, as Thompson notes, they have particular informational mysteries through which resources can be controlled, manipulated, and managed.

The city is civilization. As planners, we have been taught the culture of a people is manifested in its cities. The city is civilization. The city is center, rural America is peripheral. The city dominates its hinterland.

This image may be unpleasant to all of us. But you know it is a valid perception - for you have all seen it on your blackboards, in your books and on your roadmaps. It is your cognitive domain.

In the face of this abstract estrangement, it is difficult to face my teacher's teachers and say that "rural" is a state of being. This idea first began to filter into my consciousness while working with the Partnership. When transitioning from a meeting with the Spokane Planning Commission to a rural meeting with a concerned citizens group or a board of county commissioners, I noticed a change in rhythm - a change not only in classical space, but also in time.

This fascination with varying time dimensions continued beyond my tenure with the Partnership. This year was given to me to pause and reflect. And I have spent my time wandering and discovering the meaning of "rural" and its implications for planning.

My research this year has built upon the previous work which Vicki and I have done on the "planner-facilitator" role. (Luther and Braglio, 1978). Those of you familiar with the paper will recall our blending of the behavioral sciences and planning theory. This hybrid role became the nexus for a new "school" of planning theory and practice at Eastern Washington University.

This role was founded on John Freidmann's (1973) theory of transactive planning. In essence, this style of planning involves face-to-face, person-centered relations within small groups as a means of drawing increasing numbers of people into direct engagement with their society. This is a process of social awareness leading to social guidance (Etzioni, 1969) through social learning (Mannheim, 1935).

In this approach, the traditional planner-expert role was reconfigured to actively participate in these transactions. It was a total abandonment of the rationalistic - comprehensive planning model. Rather than working from a centralized expert-conceived goal downward, this transactive process operates upwards from a grass-roots level. As Maruyam (1973) wrote on human futuristics, "... goals are to be inductively built by the opinions of people rather than considered as a priori given." The planners role, rather than that of goal giver, is catalytic.

The planner becomes an active, radical agent of change. Grabow and Heskin (1973) describe the "Radical Concept of Planning" as one of a "non-professional professional: no longer one with a property right entitled 'planning', but rather an educator and at the same time a student...". This role is one of facilitation, of self-actualization of one self and of the others with whom one lives - the community.

This paradigm is not new, but represents the philosophical tradition of planning which originated with Karl Mannheim (Friedmann and Hudson, 1974). Mannheim explored the possibility of planning as a means of comprehensive social knowledge. Planning was viewed as a way of thinking: social consciousness as a way of thinking: social consciousness. The principium medium to awareness was education.

The behavioral sciences focuses on man's psycho-social development as a central form of planning. Planning was seen as a form of social learning (Hampden-Turner 1970; Dunn, 1971; Schon, 1971). Perhaps this is best illustrated by Donald Michael's book on Learning to Plan and Planning to Learn (1973).

In seeking a means by which planners could participate in social learning as a form of transactive planning, Vicki and I applied her knowledge of group dynamics to the problem. Starting with Kurt Lewin's (1948) concepts of the behavior of small groups, we applied Havelock's work on planned change to the task of modifying the traditional planner role. Havelock's change agent roles fit nicely into the transactive style and thus we were able to identify the needs for skills and knowledge as a:

- catalyst
- resource linker
- solution giver
- process helper

This, of course, implied knowledge and skills for group facilitation. All this moved the traditional planning role into close proximity with those of the community development specialist. We now arrive at the PRI model.

I trust all of this does not imply that Vicki and I invented the PRI model. To the contrary, we were individually and collectively seeking to implement its design.

The conceptualization of PRI occurred sometime prior to 1976 and long before my communion with this group. Some of you in this room tonight were responsible for its genesis. The basic rationale is that improved rural planning and development will be greater as a consequence of collaborative effort, greater utilization of knowledge and a combination of local and external resources, in contrast to independent and unilateral actions taken separately by each local community, external agency or organization. Assuming that external resources in the forms of knowledge, skills, and problem-solving, planning or development processes are delivered through organizations and institutions, PRI was

designed to initiate interventions in order to establish organizational and communication linkages, apply existing knowledge and skills, convene collaborative opportunities, assist in the formation of new organizations and train people for new professional roles (Lassey, 1979).

Based upon Havelock's (1969) research utilization model, with extensions by Rothman (1974), the PRI model was formed around a rural development system suggested by Moe and Tamblyn (1974). The rural development strategies outlined by Ed Moe (1975) included these general types:

- Rational-empirical, which emphasizes the use of knowledge and information as the critical input to effective development effort.
- Normative-reeducative, which emphasizes the deliberate creation of new methods and rules, while helping people to learn the required changes in values, behavior and roles through direct experience.
- Cooperative-collaborative, emphasizing the design and inventing of new linking mechanisms and new organizational arrangements which make it possible for agencies or organizations with overlapping goals or functions to work together in goal achievement.
- Power-coercive, focusing on rearranging the distribution of power and benefits in the process of development, through confrontation, conflict, and formalized efforts to use judicial and legislative decisions as the means for redefining the rules under which society operates.

None of these strategies, alone, is adequate: as Moe points out. The PRI model integrates and selectively applies each in individual and synergetic concert.

The basic structure of the PRI model is that of a linkage system. Following Havelock's (1969) concept of planning for innovation through dissemination and utilization of knowledge, the PRI model relates available knowledge to development potential in direct association with the social interaction focus on opinion leaders and power structures (Lassey, 1979).

Thus, we have with us tonight all of the components of the PRI model, actively disseminating and hopefully utilizing knowledge for the improvement of rural planning and development. For a quick evaluation of the model, look around you. Who's missing?

I stand before you tonight in living testimony to the validity of the PRI model. I have been greatly affected by my experiences with the Partnership and have responded to the knowledge gained. The historical scenario is traditional: denial and isolation; anger; bargining; depression; acceptance; and hope. Some of you remember with glee my denial of the word "facilitator" and my arrogant isolation for the community of partners. Then there was my anger at your failure to "see" my perspective. Then followed an intensive bargaining period at the academic market place. Depression led to my leaving the PRI community. This year of reflection has led to acceptance of a negotiated perspective and hope for the future history of PRI.

My frustration with the model was the linear aspect of its operation. In the typical industrial age ideology, it moves a rural community from problem statement to goals definition. There seemed to be little means by which to close the circle - to establish a self-regulating, dynamic process of community development: means and ends.

The planner-facilitator role seemed to be one means of providing assistance in "through-put" or the realization of goals and objectives continously.

However, the planner-facilitator role model has several flaws inherant in its concept. These include the following:

- Failure of rational decision-making techniques to anticipate preferable and potential change as opposed to probable events.
- Planning based upon extrapolation of historical trends rather than social innovation.
- Inability of planners to be assimilated into host communities.
- Failure of planners to understand rural values.
- Reliance of economic expansion model of social good.
- Fidelity to urban center values in evaluating rural progress.
- Lack of time to adequately participate in rural development.
- Rapid burnout due to frustration, alienation and estrangement from the community.
- Ethical and moral depression resulting from failure to achieve perceived imperatives.

In order to recalibrate the planner-facilitator role model and perhaps the PRI model, we should rethink rural America. Earlier I discussed the perception of rural regions in terms of classical space. I told you that I had recently discovered that "rural" was not a place, but rather a state of being. Let us explore that concept.

In order to explore such an alien image, you must be willing to let go of the classical Euclidian perspective which you have worked so hard to achieve. Think of me as being Don Juan, the sorcerer, and you as being Carlos Castaneda. What I'm asking you to do, is "stop the world". In Castaneda's book, Tales of Power (1974), Don Juan tells his student that civilized man looks at the world with his eyes and interprets what he "sees" through abstractions. But the sorcerer knows how to perceive with his entire body: he can step out of his habitual description of reality to "stop the world" and "see".

I'm asking you to open your mind and perceive rural America as a state of being - as a reality. This reality is different from the Euclidian reality of abstraction. In this reality, people live in what anthropologists call "the seasonal round". There is a continual and delicate adjustment of the community to nature - the community moves through space with the flow of time. The community arrives at a certain stream when the salmon are running, a hillside when the berries are ripe, the fields when the wheat is full, and then it moves on again.

Within this reality, the people have a diffused peripheral perception in which the skin isn't so much a shield and the body blends into the larger community of the environment. There is, as Thompson (1977) notes, "... almost a fetal amniotic continuity, the oceanic oneness which Freud talks about, between the hunter or gatherer and his or her surrounding world of animals and plants and spirits. It is a state of being which civilized human beings have to work to recover through years of removing the obstructions of the civilized world ..."

If you doubt the reality of the "seasonal round" in rural regions, try to hold a public meeting in hunting season, harvest seasons, and by ignoring environmental clocks.

Time is an industrial invention. It is a measure of productivity. We measure gain in relation to elapsed time. The nearer the urban center, the faster time moves. Center time is linear and goal oriented. Peripheral time is round time. It is a double helix: there is no beginning and there is no end, there are only seasons.

For the planner-facilitator who must move from the urban center to the periphery, the alteration of time may be distorting. One may be still perceiving an urban time reality while actually operating in a rural time reality. The stress can be disorienting.

To paraphrase John Friedmann, (1979), the rural community exists in time, and in time only. "Its space is the space of social relations ... It is therefore not a grounded, territorially defined society. Territory is not of its essence".

The practice of rural planning involves time travel. At least, it involves a movement from one reality to another. Too often, rural planners find themselves lost on this journey or at best arriving in a rural community when they should be leaving.

The typical urban-oriented planner has a traditional Euclian cognitive map of the rural region. This image of time and space tells the planner who he is; where he came from; and where he is going. This cognitive map also indicates his personal values by which he makes his own individual way through time and space. On one hand, the rural planner is moving along a professional "service" route and on the other hand is moving along a path of personal values. The anthropologist A.F.C. Wallace (1956) calls this cognitive mapping a "mazeway".

I've lost good friends in the mazeways of rural America. The urban-oriented planner moves from the city or academic reality to that of the rural "round". The cherished planning theory and skills no longer work. The planner, moving at a higher speed, crashes into the slower seasonal movement of the rural community. Nothing is the same but all is constant.

In this experience of intense professional distortion, the rural planner becomes lost in the mazeway. Disequilibrium leads to frustration. Greater effort leads to greater frustration. The images of goals and

ends give way to the timeless flow of the round. The mazeway becomes so distorted as to be almost obliterated. The planner is lost, profoundly lost in the most ontological sense of no longer knowing who or what he is, where he comes from, or where he is going (Thompson, 1978). Even worse, he no longer understands why he is there, at that point in time and space.

What is the rural reality? Kevin Lynch (1973) writes about a "sense of time and place". In rural communities the cognitive image of time is carried in one's family name and homestead and the image of space is carried in one's soil. Academics call it a resource orientation or agrarian lifestyle. Others call it an environmental consciousness - a personal relationship with the landscape. The American Indian has a nexus of soil and blood. There is a sense of origin and of purpose. An image of the mazeway.

Contrast this with the disposable society of the urban center. Plastic, throw-away, cosmetic architecture, manufactured art and culture, standardization, conformity and boredom, and its chief attendant - alienation.

The rural reality is singularly individualistic at each point in a cognitive domain. The reality is a creation of the moment. It continously creates and recreates itself within the world. If its space is that of social relations, then its image is that of community.

Each community is an alternative reality, defying Euclidian geometry and cartographic symbolization. Martin Buber (1955) describes the community as "... constitution of life in common." Its social relationships exist as dialogs. As Friedmann (1979) notes "... A basic premise of dialogue is that, in offering my acceptance of yourself, in inviting you through gesture and through speech to trust my acceptance, you will respond, accepting me in turn. In this way dialogue calls forth more dialogue."

The basic gesture, then, of dialogue - of community - of mutual acceptance of life in common, implies:

> "my readiness to disclose myself to you; your readiness to receive my disclosures; my readiness to receive your own disclosures of yourself; our readiness, in dialogue between us, to hold ourselves prepared for change within." (Friedmann, 1979)

The rural planner, in order to move from one reality to another, must become a part of the dialogue, to share in the mutual acceptance of life in common, to disclose himself, to receive disclosures, and to be willing to change himself and his reality.

By changing his construction of reality and changing himself in relation to and as part of that reality, the rural planner must accept the possibility of continuous, unlimited transformation. This is at once a risk and an adventure. The rural planner will assume the risk in the knowledge of the community's acceptance of himself as he is and as he might become.

Just as the rural planner is subjected to distortions of time, so is the rural community. The process of acceptance of transformation of realities may be described as a process of self-actualization (Maslow, 1962). If we consider the community as an entity, then the potential for self-actualization exists at this scale also. Certainly this is the message of Buckminister Fuller (1970) in his spaceship earth concept.

Community, constituted as life in common, involves a partnership among individuals. It is this partnership which is singular. Although we affirm differences in values and perspectives among our partners, we also confirm the humanity which we share. "Together and apart we are bound to each other in this double relation ..." (Friedmann, 1979). The nexus binding us is our affirmations and confirmations, our mutual values drawn form our mutual dialogues. In turn, we are guided by our mutual learning. As a community, we learn, we guide and we move forward through time. It is our time and our destiny. We have determined this goal together and together we shall seek it.

The rural planner, seated at the roundtable of community dialogue, has the responsibility of lending his particular knowledge and skill, in concert with his partners, to the task of anticipating and dealing with

change. The traditional planning skills of projecting and forecasting are brought to bear, while information is shared.

The trouble with today is that tomorrow isn't what it used to be. Change is moving at speeds which are difficult to imagine, much less deal with. For rural America this is a particularly critical fact. Our rural regions are in the focus of three major waves of change. There is now evident the impending collision of these waves, breaking over the rural landscape.

These waves, described by Alvin Toffler in his book The Third Wave, are the agricultural revolution, the industrial revolution, and the technological revolution. The first wave, launched some 10,000 years ago, is still moving in ebbs and flows in rural Washington. The second wave, flowing out in the 17th century, is just now reaching many rural areas. Close behind is rising the third wave. It is moving through our city centers out along the radius to the rural periphery.

A look into Lincoln County illustrates this phenomena. Rising out of the wheat fields and crowding the grain silo for the skyline are the stacks of a coal-fired electrical generating plant. In their industrial shadow, school children are involved in experiential interactions with mini-computers. This scene is being replicated in rural area after rural area as demands for resources are industrializing and technologizing agricultural communities.

If tomorrow isn't what it used to be, how can we extrapolate trends into the unknown? The rules have all changed. Just as the rural planner's mazeways become distorted by time shifts of altered realities, so will the mazeways of our communities.

If the rural planner is to participate with the community in anticipating and dealing with change, then we must develop skills to anticipate possible, probable and preferable futures. In a cumulative sense, this will require all the roles I have previously described, plus some new ones.

In search of these new roles, I turned to the field of futurists. The art and science of understanding and shaping tomorrow's world is not new. We can find its traces in Sir Thomas More's Utopia (1516), Sir

Francis Bacon's New Atlantis (1620), de Fontenelle's Dialogues of the Dead (1683), an anonymous book - The Reign of George VI, 1900-1925 (1763), Jules Verne (1865), Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward 2000-1887, (1888), Bertrand Russel Icarus or the Future of Science (1924) and of course H.G. Wells. (1905)

Recent development of futures as a field has derived from people such as Margaret Mead (1970), Bertrand de Jouvenal (1967), Robert Jungk (1954), Arthur C. Clarke (1977), de Chardin (1973), Daniel Bell (1973), John McHale (1969), Herman Kahn (1967), and Alvin Toffler (1980).

The significance of futurists for planning and community development lies in its forecasting and projecting techniques. While traditional planning relies extensively upon trend extrapolation of past history, futurists utilize techniques such as scenarios, relevance trees and futures wheels. More importantly, these futuring activities involve dialogue among partners in a social learning process, whereas trend extrapolation is typically a unilateral technocratic expert activity.

It follows that the use of futuring techniques fits very nicely into the transactive approach and greatly enhances the mutual learning community process. In this way, mutual community dialogue transcends Friedmann's (1973) concepts of "crisis of knowing" and "crisis of values". Social learning, through futuring, also transcends what Arthur C. Clarke (1977) called "the failure of nerve" and "the failure of imagination". Escaping the bounds of the "best of possible worlds" reality, communities are able to visualize alternative community realities previously beyond their experience and education - Their perception. By opening this new window to the world, the planner is able to facilitate originality in thought and courage in expression. Social innovation through social learning will lead to appropriate social guidance.

In a gestalt modality, a futuring group is moving towards Mannheim's (1935) holistic perception of community. In what Etzioni (1976) calls "heuristic futures", intellectual games and group activities seek insights into what might happen if an event were to occur or certain circumstances were to prevail. In this approach, the social learning

community explores alternative futures that are probable, possible and preferable.

These techniques are classified into two major groups. The first is exploratory.These activities begin with the present and its history, and attempt to project future developments. The second group is that of normative forecasts. These start with some desired or postulated future or condition and work backward seeking paths of transition from the present to the postulated future (Martino, 1976).

This distinction is important for application to community development work. Exploratory forecasts are more concerned with probable and possible futures, while normative forecasts are more concerned with desirable or preferable futures. Appropriate techniques within these groups are those which utilize mutual learning to educate and to encourage innovative exploration. (Fitch and Svengalis, 1979).

So we come to the future history of the Partnership for Rural Improvement. An activity of formulating a scenario of future history is an attempt to trace the possible development of events leading up to a particular state of affairs in the future. It is a chronological explanation of hypothetical events leading up to a particular state of affairs (reality) in the future (Hencley and Yates, 1974).

Let us then describe the PRI model as it could be or in my own preferable future, as it should be. The basic structural framework is still that of a linkage model. But rather than being limited to the classical constructs of Euclidian space in a three dimensional reality, the future model incorporates a space and time continuum. Not only must we link partners in spatial systems, but we must also engage the past, present and future.

While this model appears four dimensional, it is in fact six dimensional. In dealing with change in a system of alternative realities defined by time rather than space, we must consider the "round", the double helix of time.

Our dialogues and explorations will range through the three dimensions of classical space, the fourth dimension of past, present and future time

and also the alternative reality times of our communities. At any point on this continuum, we must accept the reality of the time we are in. We are of that time at that moment.

The moment of time, as measured by a standard of technocratic society, may be considered at "T_1". In a particular rural reality, this may be represented at "T_2". In exploring the future, it may be expressed as "T_3".

If we tried to construct a graphic model of this idea, and simplify that model to its essence, the task would be significant. I have erected a verbal model for you. In so doing, the elemental nature of the model has appeared to me, in bits and parts. However, in one of those phenomenal flashes of insight, I happened upon a symbol which precisely represents the graphic image of this model.

There on my desk, in full view but not in full perception, lay the answer. There resided a letter from Rich Hagood. So Rich is responsible for finally pulling this together. Not today or yesterday or last week, but some years ago. In an intuitative sense, born out of some fragmented feeling about the meaning of the Partnership, Rich devised the logo for PRI. That letterhead, with the helix of communal linkages is a perfect expression of this concept which I present to you tonight.

PARTNERSHIP FOR RURAL IMPROVEMENT
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All of our realities exist somewhere on this helix. As T.S. Eliot (1935) said, "... What might have been and what has been point to one end, which is always present ..."

We have always had this model present before us. The future history of PRI is to adapt our knowledge, skills and perceptions to make this model work.

This dialogue tonight has addressed the emerging techniques which we may utilize to bring this model from abstract reality to actual reality. These processes represent the chronological steps to our future and then represent the future history of PRI. A synergy of planning, group facilitation and futurism points the way.

We have one last step to accomplish tonight. A future history activity requires that we define this reality as a probable, possible or preferable future. I submit that there is a reality which is the trinity of the three.

This reality is the recognition of the fundamental right to adequate conditions of life, in an environment of quality which permits a life of dignity and well-being and bears a solemn responsibility to protect and enhance the environment for future generations.

The ultimate goal or, if you prefer - target, for the Partnership should be the futherance of the development of life and of mankind's potential for life. All else is subservant to this beacon.

But you must be willing to recognize the mazeway to this future. You must be willing to accept the varying realities. For us in rural planning and development, we must escape the urban centered, industrial ideological standard by which rural America has been measured. Rural communities are not on the periphery of reality anymore than rural people are hicks. We are becoming. We are establishing a human nexus in which we affirm our reality. In so doing, "... we reappropriate the world which thereby ceases to stand over against us, becoming our world and an extension of our being-here" (Friedmann, 1979).

As partners we are creating and recreating our own realities. Not from the urban center nor the periphery, but from within. We cannot be a pond, but must become a river. As Heraclitus said some 2,500 years ago, "... We step into the same river, and yet it is not the same river; we are and we are not."

How do we call ourselves? Partners. That concept calls to mind only the activity of joining. The ends to these means is still unstated. I have long searched for a title which is appropriate and functional:

describing and defining our role as partners. From many possibilities, came two which are at once radical and romantic.

Our working groups within the community normally number 12 individuals: a functional and mystical number. For these folks, I suggest the ancient title of paladin.

A paladin is one of the 12 legendary peers or knightly champions of Charlemagne. This title describes and defines any determined advocate of a noble cause. I salute the paladins among us tonight.

For the program associates, an appropriate and ancient title is that of seneschal. This is an officer having full charge of facilitating domestic arrangements, ceremonies in the household of a medieval dignitary. To the seneschals among us - I salute you.

Lastly, there are wanderers of the mazeways. These I prefer to call "Pilots of the Purple Twilight". This nonfunctional, nondescriptive title is drawn from Tennyson's Locksley Hall which I wish to leave you with tonight:

> Men my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new:
> That which they have done but earnest of the things they shall do:
>
> For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
> Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that could be.
>
> Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails.
> Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping with costly bales:
>
> Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain's a ghastly dew
> From the nation's airy navies grappling in the central blue ...
>
> Till the war drum throbbed no longer and the battle flags were furled
> In the Parliment of Man, the Federation of the World.

Thank you for your kind patience in listening to my thoughts this evening. Remember this always, in trusting relationship, in dialogue and open to the world, the Partnership is ordinary people doing extraordinary things in ordinary ways. This is my reality, consider it only a possibility.

Goodnight.

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